

MEMORANDUM RE METROPOLITAN AREA.

NOT A POLICY OF ANNEXATION.

The creation of a metropolitan area is not a policy of annexation. It is a policy of co-operation. It is something bigger and more effective than linking up Toronto with a more or less indefinite stretch of farm lands; it unites and strengthens live municipalities to their mutual advantage, and makes intervening territory a greater asset for the community, especially for the workingman.

EXISTING MUNICIPALITIES CONTINUE.

It does not imply the disappearance of existing municipal units. It means simply the coming together of a group of municipalities for the purpose of carrying out certain services which they can do jointly more effectively than they could singly.

It is but the natural and inevitable outcome of municipal conditions, particularly of the wide scope of modern communal activities and of the great possibilities of rapid local transit.

A PRACTICAL NECESSITY.

A metropolitan area is therefore no idle fancy, but a practical necessity of Toronto and the thirty or forty municipalities round about. These municipalities have many common needs that can only be worked out co-operatively: inter-municipal electric lines, permanent roads, lighting, sewage, water, housing and pre-emption of permanent breathing places.

A METROPOLITAN RADIUS.

The radius of a metropolitan area may be taken as limited by the maximum time that a workman can afford to take going to his work day-by-day. This latter may be set at one hour. The radius of a metropolitan area may therefore be fixed at approximately twenty miles, or the distance the workingman could cover in the given hour. For the Toronto district this would mean approximately a metropolitan boundary of Oakville, Brampton, Aurora or Richmond Hill, Markham and Port Union.

Recently the City Council unanimously endorsed the sound financial principle that the general ratepayer should be liable for the full cost of trunk-line services, but that for locals, property or districts directly benefited should pay the bill. Such a policy would be very necessary in a metropolitan organization.

ANNEXATION A LOCAL ISSUE.

If legislation to make this policy effective is secured it will of course give Toronto a much freer hand as to annexations. But it may be well to point out that annexations are not and cannot be a solution of the problem

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h fore us. Annexations can only affect territory immediately contiguous and within a restricted radius. Annexation remains, therefore, a local issue. The work of a metropolitan body is something above and beyond, consonant with the needs of a much wider area embracing a series of independent municipalities with much undeveloped property between.

In the case of annexations financial considerations count heavily, for at present an annexed area becomes immediately liable for the accrued obligations of the City without, for some time to come, at least, enjoying corresponding advantages in the form of municipal services. This handicap might be removed in whole or in part by special agreement or by a more business-like arrangement as regards city taxes, basing these on costs of the several classes of service actually rendered a newly annexed area. But even then the special problem of metropolitan activity would still be left practically untouched.

TORONTO'S INTEREST.

From the point of view of Toronto early action seems advisable on various grounds:

1. One must acknowledge the extreme difficulty in securing large industrial sites at reasonable figures.
2. The practical land monopoly by reason of unsatisfactory transport service.
3. The consequent extreme height of rents, hiving together of families, and springing up of congested districts.
4. The difficulty of laying plans for public works on a sufficiently generous scale when a broader area is not constantly kept in mind.

INTEREST OF OUTSIDE MUNICIPALITIES.

On the other hand, from the point of view of surrounding municipalities, the defective transportation of all kinds to and from their natural civic centre, their slow economic development, and in most cases, the unnecessary lack of certain public services which go to make life more agreeable and satisfying, all unite to give scope for successful action by a metropolitan body.

The cordial co-operation of the municipalities within the area indicated can all the more readily be counted on by reason of the fact that any taxes levied would be determined by service actually rendered.

SPECIAL REASONS FOR EARLY ACTION.

The present seems a particularly opportune time to lay plans for the following reasons:

1. The Provincial Board of Health is actively considering more satisfactory sewage disposal facilities. Such provision must take cognizance of the natural drainage of a fairly wide area.
2. Suburban districts are calling on Toronto more and more to grant them water facilities.
3. Suburban and rural demand for electric lighting and power is rapidly growing.
4. The Provincial Government's revised Hydro policy, replacing easements for its electric lines by rights-of-way opens up a wide perspective for inter-municipal lines and for a growing demand for electric power along these routes.
5. The call for permanent in place of macadam roads is heard on all sides. The Provincial Government have recognized this in their recent creation of a Provincial Road Commission.
6. In providing for a five-mile limit around Toronto, the Provincial Government and municipalities appear to have agreed already tentatively as to the need for acting now.

In taking action in a broad way we should only be recognizing local conditions and applying a simple common-sense solution. The old idea of planning for a restricted municipal area has necessarily had to change with the extending application of electricity to transportation. If to give courage to the municipalities of our district precedents are necessary, one might point to Chicago, with its eleven Park Improvement Commissions, operating over a considerable area; to the Metropolitan Commission of Boston; to London, England, with its twenty-nine districts each under a Mayor and Council; to European practice of uniting municipalities for specific purposes, and to the recent legislation of Berlin, Germany, which has created a Metropolitan Council composed of representatives of a large number of jointly interested municipalities.

But we need not rely too much on precedents before taking action. We have enough political genius in our Provincial Government, and among our Municipal Councils, to work out a system that can meet our own needs.

A POSSIBLE ORGANIZATION.

A metropolitan policy would necessarily have to be decided by a body representing the various municipalities included. The Berlin system provides that each Municipal Council must have at least one representative, and no single municipality (Berlin for example) more than two-fifths of the total number. Representatives are appointed from the various municipalities and taxes levied would be allocated amongst the various municipalities according to the nature of the work for which the tax is levied,

each municipality thus preserving its own identity. The constitution and powers of the Municipal Council would have to be defined by Provincial legislation, provision being made where advisable for appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board.

One might forecast a possible Executive or Commission appointed by the Metropolitan Council as follows:

(a) An Electric Commissioner. His duty it would be to take charge of the development of inter-municipal electric lines, location of local industrial and residential centres, lighting, telephones, etc.

(b) A Road and Parks Commissioner. His duty it would be to take care of road construction and make provision for parks, playgrounds, and other breathing places.

(c) A Health Commissioner. His duties would have to do with sewage, water and related services.

Action with regard to a metropolitan area need not necessarily wait on the outcome of the negotiations between the City and the Toronto Railway Company. At the same time it is obviously essential for Toronto to provide adequately for radial entrances into the heart of the City, otherwise civic and metropolitan development will be retarded, to the loss of all parties concerned, as long as such provision is not made.

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario have passed Town-planning Acts which bear on the suburban problem. But Canada has yet to establish a metropolitan organization. The problem is of still further interest by reason of the fact that what is found workable for one district will likely serve for general application.

SOME POSSIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

This committee has been instructed by our City Council to lay the matter of a metropolitan area before the representatives of the various municipalities concerned. The first question we may expect from the representatives is—and one may anticipate the same query from many citizens of Toronto—why is Toronto pushing this scheme now? Torontonians doubtless think their taxes high enough already, and that any comprehensive metropolitan scheme must mean more of them. 's for the outsider he will suspect that Toronto is endeavoring to "put one over on him," and will ask where is the joker? It may be well to forestall such questions by recapitulating a few explanations, so that with a frank understanding of the situation faster progress may be made.

In the first place let us start with the assumption that a suggestion that will work to common advantage need not arise from a selfish desire to "do" somebody. This is a case in point. The proposition of a metropolitan area is based on the desire for mutual advancement of Toronto and its entire

surrounding district. The fact that it is being definitely formulated now by Toronto means little. The idea has been in the air for a long time, and has been suggested probably by as many rural councillors as by City aldermen. There is no joker on either side.

Why should Toronto inaugurate the plan? Simply because Toronto grows as the country and towns round about it grow; and life in the City is made cheaper and healthier and better by the most intimate possible connection between City proper and surrounding country and towns. No fresh argument need be advanced to convince people of that.

The towns and rural municipalities may be expected to lend it hearty support because they have everything to gain by being brought into ready communication with their civic centre, which they can bring about more readily and cheaply by mutual agreement and concerted action. In fact, without Toronto's co-operation it would not be possible. The agitation for a Markham-Toronto Electric Line may serve as an illustration; as also the incipient movement for a Brampton-Toronto Line.

As to costs; by working ^{with} the Provincial Hydro-Electric, in respect of roads with the Provincial Government; by wise use of the local improvement principle, and by mutual support and careful financing, costs should be kept at a minimum and be more than offset by the advantages accruing.

THE METROPOLITAN PROGRAMME.

Let the programme be definite—inter-municipal electric lines; local electric power and lighting; permanent roads; a broader study of sewage and water problems.

S. MORLEY WICKETT,
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